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ABSTRACT

This document is devoted to the topic of citizen leaders. The first article, "Defining a Citizen Leader" (Richard A. Couto), provides a pragmatic definition of citizenship by describing citizen leaders with whom Couto has worked. "The Making of the Citizen Leader" (Cheryl Mabey) describes ways to educate for leadership while showing that traditional models may not work for the future. This article contends that people must broaden their notions of what leaders do and where they lead. In "Public Leadership and Public Politics" (Michael Briand), there is a call for a different definition of politics as a basis for educating leaders. In order to solve public problems, communities rather than individuals must come to grips with them. The fourth article, "The Political Language of Social Leaders" (Manfred Stanley), discusses how citizen leaders view their roles. In describing a selected group of civic leaders in one town, the article identifies those qualities present in individuals who assume community leadership. "Citizenship and Leadership" (Daniel Kemmis) argues that the only hope for thwarting democratic decline is a revitalization of citizenship. Kemmis contends that revitalized citizen leadership requires specific skills, behavior patterns, and a place to learn and practice them. "Citizen Leadership and Service-Learning" (Cecil D. Bradfield and R. Ann Myers) argues that to learn the citizenship skills required for a democracy, service must be integrated into the college curriculum. "Citizen Leaders for a New Politics" (Peter Bearse) calls for a new kind of public politics in which citizen leaders play a central role. (DK)

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PUBLIC LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

The Role of Citizen Leaders.

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Director of Programs ..... Suzanne W. Morse
Managing Editor ..... Ilse Tebbetts
Copy Editor ..... Betty Frecker
Cover Art ..... Long & Associates
Art Director/Production ..... George Cavanaugh
Formatting ..... Parker Advertising
Publisher ..... Robert E. Daley

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The Role of Citizen Leaders

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Introduction

by Suzanne W. Morse

Our country is at a pivotal point in its history. We are entering the twenty-first century with hopes of international peace and the promise of a changing world order. With the cataclysmic changes brought on by the ending of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, we, as Americans, have found ourselves rethinking the goals for our own democratic society. Many of the problems we had thought to have solved by now — towering deficits, domestic poverty, environmental decay — require urgent attention. We must reach out to numbers of new Americans. We must rechannel our energies for defense into the promises of peace. These old problems and new challenges raise the inevitable questions of how and who. The "how" will be debated and discussed at length. The "who" is easier to answer. The "who" is all of us. Each of us has a stake in the civic enterprise, and we will all be called on to provide leadership. There are not enough officials, elected or appointed, to even begin to get the job done.

In an informal poll taken a few years ago on the most influential citizen of the millenium, Thomas Jefferson emerged as the clear winner. He was and is the exemplar of what civic leadership is all about. The celebration of his 250th birthday in 1993 provides the opportunity to focus once again on the legacy of citizen leadership that he left. His own words say it best:

> These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live. . . . Great necessity calls for great leaders.

This sixth edition of *Public Leadership Education* is devoted to the topic of citizen leaders. The authors have both defined citizen leadership and given a prescription for developing a new kind of leader in the future.

Richard Couto provides a pragmatic definition of citizen leadership by describing citizen leaders he has worked with. Couto illustrates both the difficulty and the rewards that come with civic participation. Cheryl Mabey's description of ways to educate for leadership shows that traditional models may not work for the future. She contends that we must broaden our notion of *what* leaders do

and *where* they lead. In the third essay, Michael Briand calls for a different definition of politics as a basis for educating leaders. He writes that in order to solve public problems, communities as a whole rather than individuals must come to grips with them. How citizen leaders view their roles is the subject of Manfred Stanley's article. Writing about a selected group of civic leaders in Centertown, New York, Stanley identifies those qualities present in individuals who assume community leadership.

Daniel Kemmis argues that the only hope for thwarting democratic decline is a revitalization of citizenship. He contends that revitalized citizen leadership requires specific skills, behavior patterns, and a place to learn and practice them. In the fifth essay, Cecil Bradfield and Ann Myers argue that if students are to learn the citizenship skills required for a democracy, they must learn to work for something larger than themselves. Using a case study, they build a persuasive argument for the integration of service into the college curriculum. Finally, Peter Bearse calls for a new kind of public politics in which citizen leaders play a central role — and without which, they cannot exist for long.

The rallying cry of the 1992 election season was for a different way of doing politics and for the reconnection of people to politics. While term limits, campaign finance reforms, and a change of faces may help, it seems that the solution is more fundamental than these relatively quick fixes. People want back in; they want to have a say in how things are decided. This response challenges us to think through how we are preparing people to fulfill their positions as citizens. Never in our country's history has it been more important that we call on the talents and resources of all people to solve our problems.

Suzanne Morse is director of programs at the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio.

Defining a Citizen Leader

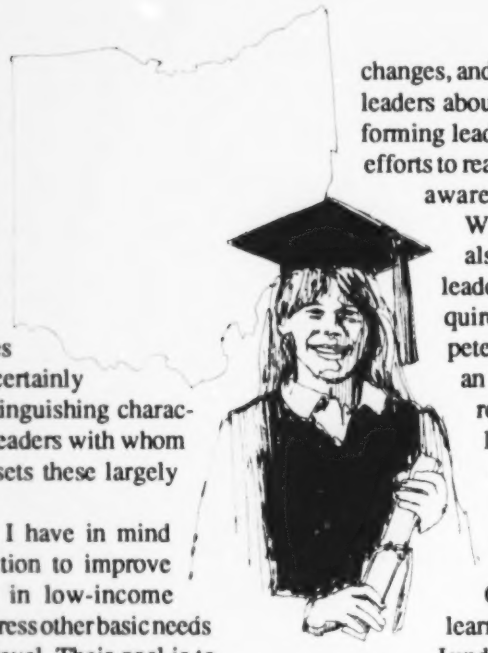
by Richard A. Couto

There I was trying to impress members of the search committee during lunch and sitting across the table from James MacGregor Burns, Pulitzer Prize-winning patriarch of leadership studies. It was difficult to eat and talk without embarrassment, so I did little eating. I talked a lot. I heard myself counter points made by one search committee member about a recent coal miners' strike in Virginia — an impolitic step. Late in our luncheon conversation, Burns lamented the dearth of leadership in contemporary America. I took issue with his point as well, suggesting that the amount and quality of leadership varied depending on where you looked. Leadership at the local community level, I asserted, is abundant and of extraordinarily high quality. Suddenly, I realized that I felt more about leadership than I thought about it. I had lived it more than I had studied it. I had worked 20 years with an array of leaders in low-income communities of the rural South, Appalachia, and several urban areas. Like them, I had spent far less time thinking about the "why's" and "how's" of leadership than on the "what's to be done" questions of leadership. I had what Michael Polanyi calls "personal knowledge" rather than scholarship. This realization gave me pause, but only momentarily. Undeterred, I forged on.

Burns and I eventually agreed on the disappointing dearth of political and national leadership and ascribed it, in large measure, to the fragmentation of America's political structures. We also agreed that possibly we have more and better leadership at the local level of American life than we give ourselves credit for. Fortunately, I got the job. Burns and I became colleagues and eventually traveled through parts of Appalachia to meet some of the community leaders I had had in mind when I spoke.

This trip, my new job, and that luncheon conversation challenged me to examine what I had taken for granted: What is citizen leadership? And why is it important? As I learned more about leadership, I recognized that I was dealing with only one form of citizen leadership. Legislators, labor union officers, social service agency heads, directors of nonprofit organizations, civic and business leaders, elected and appointed political officials are all citizens and they are also leaders to one

degree or another. I was tempted to stretch a definition from that luncheon conversation to cover all these people. Such a definition, however, would risk becoming a Fourth of July celebrative elaboration of the virtues of American life, and certainly would obscure the distinguishing characteristics of the citizen leaders with whom I have worked. What sets these largely ignored leaders apart?



The citizen leaders I have in mind facilitate organized action to improve conditions of people in low-income communities and to address other basic needs of society at the local level. Their goal is to raise the floor beneath all members of society, rather than to enable a few to touch its vaulted ceiling. Sometimes citizen leaders work for change, protesting proposed toxic waste dumping near their homes, for example. In all cases, they exhibit the leadership which occurs when people take sustained action to bring about change that will permit them continued or increased well-being. They recognize the existence of community, a set of relationships among people forged by some special bond. Sometimes that bond includes residence in a particular place. It *always* includes the common human condition with all of its aspirations and potentials.

There are obvious similarities between this form of citizen leadership and broader concepts of leadership. It entails follower-leader relationships and collaboration, exchanges, and interchanges. The citizen leaders about whom I write are transforming leaders who engage others in efforts to reach higher levels of human awareness and relationships. With time, citizen leaders also become transactional leaders and some of them acquire the administrative competencies needed to manage an organization. Burns has referred to "cobblestone leadership" and the "second and third tier" of leadership. These citizen leaders embody those concepts as well.

On the other hand, as I learned more about leadership, I understood the differences between the citizen leadership I knew and other concepts of leadership. For example, in my first class on leadership studies, I asked my students to draw pictures of leadership. In response, students drew an array of images of money, power, prestige, and superiority — leaders were in front of or above others. Few scholars would define leadership in such terms, yet my students probably reflected accurately the lessons they had acquired from popular culture.

Citizen leaders contrast markedly with such popular conceptions of power and, to a lesser extent, with academic conceptions as well. For one thing, citizen leaders usually do not choose leadership. They do not even seek it. They leave their private lives reluctantly for these public roles. Often they intend to take some public action, to achieve their

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purpose quickly, and then to return to private matters. Customarily, their first action is to approach the people in charge to get something done about a specific problem. It is only when they are rebuffed or rebuked that citizen leaders go farther, eventually entering into a chain of events and actions that leads to the achievement of their original purpose. Somewhere in that chain, the people I have in mind acquire the truly distinguishing characteristic of leadership: the gift of trust bestowed by others with whom they work. Their groups may establish a formal organization — "Concerned citizens of . . . " is a frequently used name — and citizen leaders will be elected or delegated to act on behalf of the group. Whatever their titles, citizen leaders have a deeper sense of responsibility and higher sense of authority that comes from the trust others have bestowed informally upon them to act on behalf of the group.

Citizen leadership brings new responsibilities, new contacts, media exposure, and other trappings of leadership that, more often than not, citizen leaders would prefer to shed. They would like to return to their "normal" lives. Ten years ago, Larry Wilson and his wife, Sheila, backed into leadership positions in the controversy over pollution of Yellow Creek near their eastern Kentucky home. Today, they direct a regional environmental program of the Highlander Research and Education Center. He attended the United Nations Earth Summit in Brazil in the summer of 1992. At the same time, she visited other citizen leaders in Northern Ireland who had traveled to Appalachia earlier to observe her work. Larry Wilson calls local environmental citizen leaders "reluctant warriors," who pay for their leadership:

> These people have to raise families in the contaminated areas, punch a time clock within an organization that is frequently opposed to their environmental activities, be sensitive to rocking the political boat, [and] maintain social ties in a community divided by the issue they are working on.

The Wilsons' full-time work creates an alter ego that separates them from other local citizen leaders to whom they feel kindred. As Larry Wilson put it, "I wake up in a different world every morning." His expanded role of citizen leader requires him to accept that new world, but to adjust it to a world he does not want to leave behind.

Citizen leaders usually do not choose ... or seek ... leadership. They leave their private lives reluctantly for these public roles. Often they intend to take some public action, to achieve their purpose quickly, and then to return to private matters.

The loss of what is familiar prompts citizen leader William Saunders to maintain adamantly that he did not and would not choose the role. His work on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, and his direction of the 100-day hospital workers' strike in Charleston in 1969, earned him a place in the film,

You Got to Move, which dramatizes citizen leadership. Saunders now runs a radio station in Charleston, South Carolina, and continues to be an important part of the civil rights movement and antipoverty programs in the area. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., Saunders understands citizen leadership as a burden, a cross that few would take up willingly. After all, he points out, the transforming aspect of citizen leadership transforms the personal lives of leaders as well as the conditions they intend to change:

> It's not the kind of life you choose. You get caught up in it. But you wouldn't choose to be misunderstood. A preacher near here gave a sermon, "Being Picked Out to be Picked On." That's a heavy subject. To see things clearly ahead of your time carries a heavy price. You're friendless. There's no one you can talk with straight across the board, not even your family. Ten years later, they may see what you are saying, but by that time, you've gone on.

Citizen leadership is leadership with far fewer perks and far less glamour than that which marks those in the threadbare political and national leadership we lament. At the same time, citizen leadership comes with the same or greater personal costs as other forms of leadership.

Despite their reluctance, citizen leaders act from fairly simple motives. One does not hear long, complicated analyses of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Instead, citizen leaders speak in simple terms about the basic dignity of every human being. They act from the conviction that we, as a society, are responsible for redressing the conditions that undermine and understate the human dignity of any of its members. While others may accept the needs and deprivation of some groups without a sense of moral responsibility, citizen leaders cannot. They are compelled to pass on to the next generation a society less tolerant of human and environmental degradation. For citizen leaders, with bonds to specific low-income communities, success has a single, clear measure: Will our children have a reasonable choice to live with dignity in their community as adults? Eventually, their assertion of social responsibility for the human condition becomes exceedingly troublesome. It means entering the value of "community" into economic calculations in which community has no monetary value. It means giving voice and stature to groups of people without political influence. Citizen leadership means making a political, economic, and social system accountable for whom it serves and fails to serve.

Citizen leaders express the simplicity of their motives in anger mixed with humor and determination to persuade those who impede them to recognize the human dignity of individuals and the worth of community. Eula Hall helped establish a health center in Mud

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Creek in eastern Kentucky. She still works at the center to assure residents of the area access to medical care providers and to the rights and benefits to which they are entitled. She exemplifies the sophisticated competencies citizen leaders acquire to conduct their work. She has an outstanding record of victories in black lung hearings, for example. Press her for her reasons for a 30-year career in full-time citizen leadership and she echoes Fannie Lou Hamer: "You just get sick and tired of seeing people get pushed around."

While others may accept the needs and deprivation of some groups without a sense of moral responsibility, citizen leaders cannot.

Citizen leaders are not showered with traditional forms of recognition. Colleges and universities, for example, often ignore them or delay recognizing their achievements. Citizen leaders are likely to be pressing the medical school's hospital on its policy for indigent care. They are likely to be protesting conditions in the rental property of a university's landlord, or protesting the inadequacy of pollution controls at the plant of a major university contributor. It serves the interest of many institutions to ignore the reality citizen leaders work to make us aware of. Colleges interested in instructing students about the workings of the American economy are more likely to encourage them to speak to people in corporate offices than in picket lines.

Recognition does come to citizen leaders. First, and fewest, are the awards that recognize them for addressing an issue of injustice or inequality. In general, these awards come from organizations and institutions, including some foundations, that understand themselves as part of a process of basic social change. Larry Wilson was designated an environmental hero by *Mother Jones*. Second, and most frequent, are the awards that recognize citizen leaders for individual courage within a context of need but separate from the political and social issues that underlie that need. These awards make citizen leaders into heroes and heroines by emphasizing their personal traits. *People* magazine, for example, depicted Eula Hall as a crusader when it included her among 25 "Amazing Americans!"

Eventually, some citizen leaders are recognized by institutions that previously shunned them. This form of award measures the acceptance of positions that citizen leaders took and the transformation of society and some of its institutions. Bill Saunders, for example, served as chairman of the Democratic Party of Charleston County. The leadership path that led him to this position began with a protest against racial barriers that prevented him and others from voting and joining a political party. Often this recognition comes long after the controversy has subsided, after the citizen leader has passed on the mantle of leadership to others, or even after he or she has died.

As I thought about why citizen leadership is important, I came back to our luncheon consensus about the dearth of national and political leadership. Citizen leadership pro-

tests and mitigates the shortcomings of our national and political leadership. In the absence of strong formal political leadership, leadership slips over into the hands of those with economic and social power. We not only recognize this dispersion of political power, we praise it. We teach pluralism as a political system which provides a high probability that an active and legitimate group can make itself heard effectively in the process of decision making. Our first inclination is to include citizen leadership in that pantheon, but that would miss the importance of the form of citizen leadership with which I am concerned.

Citizen leadership demands that the political system expand its notion of "legitimate" groups beyond economic and social elites. It constantly presses the static boundaries of our political system to broaden, to incorporate new issues, and to involve new groups. For citizen leaders, politics is the public expression of society's sense of community and of the common interests of its members. Invariably, citizen leaders are criticized early on in their efforts precisely because of their efforts to wake sleeping dogs and to expand the public agenda. Any political system throws up barriers to resist change. If there is one thing that citizen leaders are about, it is taking down those barriers. The greater the change, the more likely the resistance. Citizen leaders soon understand that their form of leadership is intolerable for some. All the people mentioned in this essay have stories of being shot at and threatened with physical harm and arson.

Eventually, most citizen leaders learn to work within "the system," but it is a system changed by their presence. Eula Hall invited the representative of her congressional district to the ground-breaking ceremony for the new clinic in Mud Creek. Twenty years before, that would have been inconceivable.

Citizen leadership demands that the political system expand its notion of "legitimate" groups beyond economic and social elites.

But, in the intervening time, Hall's aspirations and leadership had acquired legitimacy. Likewise, any listing of the political elite of Charleston and, perhaps, South Carolina today will include Bill Saunders. Larry Wilson and the Concerned Citizens of Yellow Creek initiated forums to discuss issues with candidates for local political positions.

In a sense, citizen leadership is a parallel government, a shadow government, or a government in exile depending on the degree of change entailed in its demands. As a "parallel government," citizen leaders carry out changes before political leaders are prepared to do the same. Addressing the needs of the homeless is the most recent case in point. In cases where needed changes exceed the capacity of citizen leaders, they may become a "shadow government," the loyal opposition of those with political power, to demand public action for public problems heretofore ignored or considered "illegitimate." The demand for public responses to the AIDS crisis illustrates the point on a national scale.

When the demand for change exceeds the capacity of public officials to act, citizen leaders also become a "government in exile" waiting for the day that issues, long denied, become crises demanding action.

Through protest, demands for fairer portions of public resources for some groups, and a vision of a transformed state of society in which the bonds of community are more apparent, citizen leaders pursue and establish change. In some measure, the dearth of political leadership that we lament reflects the inability or unwillingness of elected and appointed leaders to express the degree of compassion, concern, and community that animates citizen leadership. In part, this failure is structural and needs to be fixed. In another sense, however, it represents a valuable gap worth preserving. As long as our citizen leaders exceed the quality of our elected and appointed leaders, the latter have someone to follow — what could be more central to a vital democracy?

Richard Couto is professor of Leadership Studies at the Jepson School of the University of Richmond.

The Making of the Citizen Leader

by Cheryl Mabey

A current snapshot of contemporary American politics reveals largely cynical, spectator-citizens waiting for the right type of leader(s) to resolve for them the critical problems in their neighborhoods, communities, states, and country. But the distance between citizens and leaders is greater than ever. Leaders appear detached or stripped of communal identity; citizens forfeit personal participation choosing instead to pass on unrealistic expectations to public leaders.

The picture is disquieting — but far from hopeless. The heterogeneity of Americans provides a powerful resource to revitalize political life and to foster a public language involving freedom and responsibility, individualism and community, present needs and future plans. The potential for change is real. What must be done is to challenge commonly held assumptions about the dichotomy between leadership and citizenship. We need a much more inclusive definition of leadership in order to tap the potential to influence public life inherent in each of us. The crucial change needed on the political landscape in an America approaching the twenty-first century is the development of citizen leaders.

Traditional Leadership Models

At a time when sound bites are the prevalent mode of political discourse, images of leadership and citizenship may conform to an increasingly narrow definition. Research findings bear this out. Such diverse groups as politically active college women participating in the NEW Leadership Program at Rutgers University, and high school student leaders in Los Angeles, California, were asked to draw pictures describing what the word "leadership" meant to them. Two common elements emerged. First, the picture of the leader was always larger, more prominent than any other image on the page. Second, the leader was at a podium or on a stage, separate from a group passively listening to this larger, more important figure. Some drawings went so far as to include a line designating a space for the leader separate from that of the many followers.

This graphic illustration of the relationship between leaders and followers complements many prevailing theories about leader-

ship. The leader is the one responsible for solving problems and for effectively communicating the answer(s) to the populace or group. The focal point in most leadership theories is on the leader.

The "trait theory" of leadership ascribes certain personality traits or attributes exclusively to leaders. Although research has failed to validate that leaders and followers possess different personality traits or that leaders share certain traits in common, a popular conception of leadership equates leadership with the personality of the leader. Journalists assessing potential presidential candidates daily demonstrate the durability of the trait theory. Not only does this approach create unrealistic expectations of potential leaders as superhumans nearing perfection, but it distorts the richly complex relationship between leading and following into a misleadingly simplistic focus on an individual. Leadership involves considerably more than a leader.

The "organizational theory" of leadership also narrows leadership to the position which any leader occupies within an organization. This fusion of leadership with office ignores the distinction between authority and leadership. The theory further assumes that a few are leaders and most are followers, failing to recognize the multiplicity of informal as well as formal leadership roles even within the most complex organizational structures. Perhaps it is the overlapping nature of these theories which results in the notion of leader *separate from* the group.

According to the "vision theory," a currently popular view of leadership, it is the job of the leader to imagine the future direction in which a company or country needs to go, and to communicate that vision effectively to others. Ideas, solutions to problems, personal meaning, and goals are the purview of leaders. The act of leading becomes the act of persuading others to adopt the leader's ideas through effective communication or marketing. All too often, expectations are raised that societal ills could be alleviated if only better individuals emerged in leadership positions.

Another prevalent leadership theory deriving from social sciences and management — the "situational theory" — acknowledges that leadership necessitates varying degrees of interaction between the group and a leader. In fact, this theory urges leaders to focus first upon the situation, the readiness of the group, to perform and work together. This transactive view of leadership suggests that effective leaders adapt their leadership style to provide what the group needs and in return the group "follows" the leader. Certainly, the situational leadership approach involves more complex interaction than the other three theories of leadership, but it measures leaders

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in terms of their ability to influence a group rather than to act in concert with it.

A fifth theory of leadership, labeled as the "power theory" and commonly associated with Machiavelli, can be considered as old as human nature. Leaders are the movers and shakers who get things done. Power in its different guises is a resource to be used prudently by the leader. A contemporary twist of the "power theory" is that the leader empowers others to use power. On the surface, Machiavelli and empowerment may appear paradoxical, but if the dominant paradigm is primarily leader-focused, "empowerment of others" can be viewed as simply another way of increasing the leader's power base.

These limited views of leadership are dangerous for two reasons: the group becomes overly dependent upon the leader to solve its problems, resulting in complacency or passivity among followers; and, the expectations that the leader can solve problems or create meaning are too high, resulting in the ultimate failure of society's leaders.

Today's leadership crisis may not lie in the caliber of our current leaders, but rather in our failure to mobilize group resources to solve the group's problems. In an analogy to the physician-patient relationship, Ronald Heifetz of Harvard University identifies three situations that illustrate the shortcomings of a problem-solving model reliant on the leader alone.

In a Type I situation, the patient has an infection which the physician can treat with an antibiotic. The problem is relatively simple and the physician (leader) has the resources to treat the disease.

In a Type II situation, the patient has a chronic disease, such as high blood pressure. The physician may treat it partially through medication, but the patient shares in his or her own care by monitoring diet, exercise, stress, or other life-style factors. Both the physician and patient share in the responsibility for solving this problem.

Today's leadership crisis may not lie in the caliber of our current leaders, but rather in our failure to mobilize group resources to solve the group's problems.

In a Type III situation, the patient has a medically untreatable disease, such as an advanced stage of cancer. The options for treatment are negligible and the physician recognizes that the patient assumes the responsibility for facing the future. The physician may be a support, but the locus of power in handling such a crisis is the patient's alone.

The conventional paradigm of equating leadership with the leader's ability to solve problems overlooks the continuum of crises confronting society. Expecting the leader to initiate and carry out solutions in a straightforward Type I problem may be realistic. In the majority of instances, however, the issues facing leaders are more complex, necessitating collective problem-solving strategies of the group and its leaders. The challenge is to develop a broader concept of leadership

which emphasizes this dynamic relationship.

Redefining American Citizenship

Divergent meanings of citizenship have evolved throughout American history. The *republican* tradition, derived in part from Greek and Roman political thought, posited that civic participation was the foundation of a free society. Virtue, communal values, and a sense of mutual obligation formed the cornerstone which both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison viewed as necessary to secure liberty or happiness.

The *liberal* tradition inherited from the Enlightenment detached the concept of "citizen" from any communal ties or responsibilities. In the dominant liberal view, the citizen is seen mainly as a bearer of rights, such as the freedom to speak, to vote, or to worship. As Harry Boyte traces these approaches to citizenship in his book, *CommonWealth: A Return to Citizen Politics*, he points out that: "such an individualist conception of politics neglects the moral wellsprings of public life, the values like responsibility, fairness, and concern for others that were widespread at the nation's founding."

Even the *Progressive* movement of the twentieth century did not recapture the concept of an engaged citizenry. For most progressives, citizens acted by proxy and through the state with no broad popular involvement. The concept of "public" became specialized — the preserve of representatives, guided by the advice of experts, bureaucrats, and professionals.

The "managerial" era of the late twentieth century witnessed a transferal of the power to make key decisions about the public good, to experts, technical specialists, and professionals. Citizenship was defined in weak and attenuated ways, and citizens increasingly became spectators rather than participants in the political process.

Today, the operative paradigms for leadership and citizenship have stressed that the few exercise power over the many, and have reinforced passive rather than active behavior from average citizens. Individual or special interests supersede consideration for the general welfare or common good.

Broad-based and effective citizen leaders in our times are possible if — and only if — citizens develop the abilities to gain access to information of all kinds and the skills to put such information to effective use. At the same time, citizens committed to public life, community, and leadership will need to recognize and understand certain restraining forces in the world as it is.

American culture is predicated on an egocentric view of society: that is, a society made up of individuals freely able to contract to meet their individual needs. The unit of American society is the individual. Other culture's basic units are groups or clans. Where a nation such as Kenya may aspire to "getting there together" or honor the "harambee" spirit, the American tradition is

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embedded in individual achievement that leaves a trail for others to follow. One obstacle for expanding leadership skills and opportunities to all citizens is our cultural bias in favor of individual action. In this view, groups are often suspect. Groups are voluntary associations, which individuals choose to affiliate with when their own interests are served.

The skills and capabilities so necessary for citizen leaders begin with a positive invitation to become one.

Another obstacle to active citizenry is the exaltation of "the expert" in our culture. Even citizens knowledgeable about and committed to public life face an age of information of dizzying proportions. For the average student unacquainted with the institutions and processes of government or uninterested in contemporary issues, there is truth in the belief that others know more. If there is a societal problem, too often resources are expended in trying to find a technological fix even if the problem is political or social in nature. Many problems do not need experts to solve them. Neighborhoods or communities throughout the U.S. possess the resources to solve their own problems. Yet, the persistent belief that "professionals" or "experts" know more and should tell others what to do paralyze many community initiatives.

A further obstacle to developing a broader base of citizen leaders is the identification of leaders with certain positions. An officeholder is automatically defined as a leader whether or not he or she leads anyone. Nonofficeholders are labeled outsiders or activists. Public space must be created for legitimizing informal citizen leaders and formal leaders to come together to discuss and offer alternative solutions to societal problems.

Somehow a language and a message must be forged outlining the positive expectations of citizenship. Millions of dollars have been spent on shaping negative campaigns, telling citizens why a particular candidate should not be elected. Youth are bombarded by negative messages: "Say No to Drugs," "Don't get pregnant!" "Don't drop out of school!" "Stay away from gangs!" Nowhere is there a positive creed for what society expects from its adult citizens or its youth. The skills and capabilities so necessary for citizen leaders begin with a positive invitation to become one.

"Couch citizens" must become active citizen leaders. The assumption is that each person is responsible for contributing to the common good in different areas. Participation at any level is an exercise of leadership, joining others to use power for constructive ends. Unlike the prevalent notion of solitary leaders finding answers and announcing solutions through mass media, the challenge for the twenty-first century is to prepare citizens to act together in a more interactive, dynamic process. The narrow command-and-control leadership style no longer works.

Making Citizen Leaders

Citizen leadership requires distinctive

skills and capabilities that require development. Socialization in homes and schools must include the recognition that every citizen will lead. Civic participation is not an elective but a given. Each person matters. The axiom of Mount St. Mary's College Women's Leadership Program is that every student has the opportunity to enroll and participate in this program because the question is not *if* one will lead but rather *how effective* a leader one becomes. Such a message is important to this population of women, the majority of whom are women of color and first-generation college students.

Public life cannot be made synonymous with American government structures or processes. Public life — and political conversations — begin in the kitchens, neighborhoods, streets, cities, and organizations where we live and work. Caring passionately for something is the key to political participation. "Private" life impinges on "public" life. Likewise, public policy can limit or expand personal choices. Developing a citizen leader begins with encouraging opportunities for "doing something" with others and for giving "voice" to one's impressions and reactions. One of the objectives of Project Public Life based at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs is to teach a new kind of politics — citizen politics — in which citizens are powerful actors in public problem solving. In the workbook, *Making the Rules: A Guidebook for Young People Who Intend to Make a Difference*, readers are urged to develop "a big picture of politics, one that includes public life — an active, diverse, challenging arena in which we act on what matters to us."

Citizen leaders must obtain knowledge. Not only do citizen leaders need to become competent or knowledgeable about what they advocate, but they need to understand how the system operates. Too often, citizenship training is limited to formal knowledge about the institutions of government without ever addressing practical issues of access to civic knowledge. Community leadership programs, like the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) network, provide a model curriculum in public life. Policy issues are joined to theories of action that include concepts such as power, mediating institutions, public life, judgment, imagination, and self-interest. Such concepts are tied, in turn, to discussion of democratic and religious values, and the traditions that inform and frame them — justice, concern

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for the poor, the dignity of the person, diversity, participation, and cultural heritage. Strategies for change and community organizing techniques arise from the explicit assumption that neighborhood trainees have an important measure of responsibility for the public good of their community.

Action marks the citizen leader. Knowing

is insufficient without action. Community service opportunities — even a school's community service requirement — expose others to a real world beyond their private lives. The Constitutional Rights Foundation, through its Youth in Community Service (YCS) program in southern California high schools, provides students with opportunities to learn and become involved with community problems. Linking action with reflection is a powerful learning model. "Skills for action" need to be recognized and nurtured by parents and educators alike. Time spent working with groups in student activities or volunteering may outdistance many more solitary, cognitive tasks in developing future citizen leaders.

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While most learning involves working independently, educators are recognizing the importance of cooperative learning. Study groups, group projects, or small group discussions utilize a more collective view of work. Often ignored, though, is the necessity for teaching the social skills required for cooperativeness. If the dominant mode of playing, studying, and working is that of the independent competitor, different folkways of team-building and win-win problem solving need to be introduced and practiced. Outdoor leadership education such as programs sponsored by Outward Bound or the Wilderness Institute provide experiential laboratories in trust, team-building, and collective problem solving.

While others have addressed the importance of developing judgment, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, a frequently overlooked skill for citizen leaders is learning to ask effective questions and to listen well. Given the scarcity of resources, concentrating on the "right set of questions" may be more critical than analyzing the "right answers" to questions of lesser importance. We will need to develop educational and civic programs or opportunities which develop the capacity for brainstorming and recognizing possibilities, rather than for limiting choices or critiquing ideas.

As recent events in Eastern Europe or southern California have demonstrated, citizen leaders do not possess the magical panacea for public life. They are bound by their definitions of leadership, history, and culture. The making of citizen leaders occurs too frequently in the cauldron of conflict and crisis rather than by design or invitation. Still, politics, as former Czech President Vaclav Havel has reminded the world, is not only the art of the possible: "It can also be the art of the impossible, that is, the art of making both ourselves and the world better."

Cheryl Mabey is director of the Women's Leadership Program and an associate professor at Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, California.

Public Leadership and Public Politics

by Michael Briand

Of the second-rate leaders people speak
respectfully saying,
"He has done this, he has done that."
Of the first-rate leaders,
they do not say this. They say,
"We have done it all ourselves."

Lao Tze

In 1831, the young French scholar Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States to study democracy in America. The book he wrote on his return to France, *Democracy in America*, has become a classic. In many ways, it is still the most astute, most insightful analysis of public life in America communities ever achieved.

In the United States of the 1830s, Tocqueville wrote, "Nothing [was] more striking . . . than the absence of . . . the government. . . ." He found this situation both understandable and admirable. In his view, no government could "administer the affairs of each locality better than the citizens could do it for themselves . . . when the people are as enlightened, as awake to their interests, and as accustomed to reflect on them as the Americans are. . . . "

In the United States, Tocqueville went on to observe, "when a private individual meditates an undertaking . . . directly connected . . . with the welfare of society, he never thinks of soliciting the co-operation of the government. . . . He courts the assistance of other individuals. . . ."

But times change. Much as we might want to believe the flattering portrait Tocqueville painted a century and a half ago, our current experience makes clear that it no longer holds true. In 1991, a study conducted for the Kettering Foundation entitled *Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street America*, reported that members of the public are frustrated by and angry about our inability to solve problems in our country today. And they blame the current crop of official leaders for failing — sometimes willfully — to respond to the public's concerns. The public distrusts its official leaders. Americans believe politicians don't listen to citizens, but to the advocates for special interests. They feel they aren't consulted, that their point of view

is crowded out. In their minds, elected officials are neither responsive nor accountable to the public.

Let's go back to Tocqueville for a moment. How does the situation in our society and communities today differ from what he observed in the 1830s? Read the statements below one more time and pay attention to the highlighted phrases:

> "Nothing [was] more striking . . . than the **absence of . . . the government** . . . ." No government could "administer the affairs of each locality better than **the citizens could do it for themselves . . . . A private individual . . . never thinks of soliciting the cooperation of the government. . . . He courts the assistance of other individuals. . . .**"

"Absence of government," "Citizens could do it for themselves," "A private individual never thinks of soliciting the cooperation of government — he courts the assistance of other individuals." Clearly, in the 1830s, Americans were rather more self-reliant when it came to public matters than they are today. They didn't wait around for the experts or their official leaders to solve their problems for them. Instead, they talked *with each other* about what to do — and then they did it. In the towns and villages of the early nineteenth century, government wasn't just for the people — it was *of* them and *by* them as well. Americans were truly *self*-governing.

Granted, American communities of the late twentieth century are much bigger, more complex, and confronted with more far-reaching, deeply rooted, and complicated problems than those faced by the communities Tocqueville observed. Yet for all the obvious and important differences between communities then and now, it's worth asking ourselves whether the problem isn't so much how our communities have changed as how *our view of democratic self-government* has changed.

Maybe the problem is that we've defaulted on our duty as citizens to take responsibility for solving our own problems. Maybe we should stop looking for leaders who will show us the way forward and instead start looking to ourselves for answers. Perhaps the question we should ask ourselves is not, "How do we get effective leaders?" but "How do we, as a community, begin to address a problem we want to solve?"

A Misleading Metaphor

When you stop and think about it, public life in our communities today looks a lot like the world of the private economy we're all familiar with from our work lives. Although the ideal of community life remains one in which people treat each other as friends and neighbors — almost like members of an extended family — the hard fact is that we approach each other impersonally — even warily — keeping most of our fellow citizens at arm's length. This is revealing, because this is the way we behave in commercial transactions. In the public life of our communities today, just as in an economic market, people are too preoccupied with the competition to realize their particular interests and desires. They try to satisfy these by "buying" the goods and services they want from the "producer" of these goods and ser-

vices — in this case, government. Citizens are "consumers" of what government can provide.

So public life is reduced to the question of "who gets what, when, and how." The "community" is nothing more than a loose collection of individuals and groups, each with opinions, preferences, and positions that have to be accommodated. The assumption is that there is no *common* or *public* good or interest apart from what emerges from a fair competition among *particular interests*. As in an economic market, the best result is the one that comes closest to satisfying every individual's and group's desires. The assumption that there are only particular desires and interests of individuals and groups, in turn, leads us to rely on decision-making procedures such as majority rule, which merely adds up people's preferences and bases policy on what the majority wants — modified, of course, by such concessions as those in the minority can compel it to make.

Hence, the emphasis on the power to influence policymakers who have the authority to make decisions. If the community is like a market, then the people who occupy what ought to be positions of community leadership end up having to act like brokers or agents. The demands we place on elected officials turn them into experts at "working the system." Their "leadership" consists of using governmental authority to serve "the customers." An effective "leader" is someone who can "deliver the goods." A popular "leader" is someone who can respond to the desires of as many individuals and groups as possible without upsetting others. In reality, "leadership" amounts to a talent for selling people the line that their wishes will be fulfilled, even though (it goes without saying) everyone has to compromise, and some may even have to lose.

Clearly, in the 1830s, Americans were rather more self-reliant when it came to public matters than they are today. They didn't wait around for the experts or their official leaders to solve their problems for them.

We like to dress up our idea of a "real leader," prettify it so we forget the ugly reality beneath our decorous descriptions. We say to ourselves, "a leader is a person who knows what needs to be done and sets about doing it. He takes charge, looks for a solution, and gets busy persuading others to support it. He knows what the problem is, what causes it, and what will solve it. We can trust him, have faith in his character and good intentions. We can rest assured that he's ready to 'play hard ball' with opponents who, out of ignorance or malevolence, have the temerity to resist his reasonable proposals." At his democratic best, a "real leader" tries to empower folks. Trouble is, he often ends up trying to "overpower" them. He's never short on "facts," opinions, options, and plans. He's a skillful, political strategist, he's a spellbinding "communicator," and he's ready to solve our problems — now!

Of course, there never seems to be enough people with these abilities to go around. The

supply of "real leaders" can't keep up with our needs and expectations.

Back to Tocqueville. Perhaps we don't get the sort of leadership — and leaders — we *really* need because we've forgotten something important about politics: in a democracy, government is supposed to be not only *for* the people, but *of* them and *by* them as well. This is not to suggest that we should, or can, do away with government. Quite the contrary; government is indispensable. But, it is to suggest that we ask ourselves whether government can operate effectively in the absence of a form of community life that, unlike the market (per)version that prevails currently, places the responsibility for sound public decision making squarely on the shoulders of citizens. If such an alternative view is called for, our understanding of the nature of leadership, and of who our leaders are, must change as well.

Direction and Choice

Leadership implies that someone — a leader — is leading us *somewhere*. But somewhere is not just *anywhere* — we don't want to be led in circles, for example, or down the garden path. Where, specifically, do we want to go? In a democracy, a direction for a community can be set only by the members of the community itself. We define such a direction by deciding which circumstances or conditions constitute problems for us and by deciding how to go about solving those problems. Because problems such as crime, economic stagnation, ineffective education, and the like cannot be solved by any one person or group, they require a community — a public — response. Even when a "market solution" for a social problem is appropriate, no individual or group acting unilaterally can effect such a solution. Only the community can authorize and implement a market-based response. When markets are permitted to operate, they do so because, explicitly or implicitly, we agree that they should.

The community must take responsibility for facing up to the fact that every social problem poses a hard choice, that no matter what we do, there will be undesirable consequences as well as desirable ones.

Moreover, actions taken in response to problems that touch many or all of us inevitably have consequences that affect some people adversely. Proposals to take action thus prompt opposition and lead to disputes. As in any dispute, a public dispute can be resolved only by the parties involved — in this case, by the members of the community who are in disagreement.

Whether a problem *is* a problem, how serious it is, how susceptible to solution it is, who bears primary responsibility for solving it, and what should be done about it are questions over which people can reasonably disagree. Because every course of action carries positive as well as negative consequences, and because typically there is no clear, universally accepted answer to the question of what to do, solving a social problem invariably presents us with a di-

lemma, a hard choice.

In this situation, any solution that stands a chance of being both effective and supported widely must emerge from a decision-making process that enables everyone affected by the problem and the attempt to solve it to feel that the decision is acceptable to him, that he can go along with it. For reasons of both fairness and effectiveness, this decision-making process requires a collective judgment that incorporates the perspectives and concerns of everyone, and that draws on everyone's experience and abilities. In short, no one can take care of the community's business — no one can set a direction for the community — except the community itself.

It follows that, in a sense, the community must lead *itself*. Community leaders will thus be those who, in their thinking and actions, reflect the community's will. But no individual can read the community's mind, and no individual can execute its will, because that "mind" and that "will" literally do not exist until the members of the community, through collective thought and action, create them. At most, community leadership consists of helping the community find out for itself what it wants and helping citizens articulate the community voice. The purpose of leadership is to serve as a catalyst. Leadership is the ingredient that makes the democratic recipe work, the leaven that helps the community's bread rise instead of collapsing into an unpalatable and gooey mess.

What, then, does the community have to do for itself, and how do its members provide leadership? At a minimum, the community must take responsibility for facing up to the fact that every social problem poses a hard choice, that no matter what we do, there will be undesirable consequences as well as desirable ones. There will be undesirable consequences because we value a variety of things, and these things often come into conflict. Which should we value more: clean air and our health, or the convenience and freedom that driving our own cars afford? To which should we give priority: the air that would be polluted by burning our trash, or the ground water that would be contaminated by burying it? Which should we save: the jobs that a new factory would provide, or the green belt that shields our homes from the harshness of asphalt and skyscrapers? This is what makes social problems notoriously difficult nuts to crack. When good things come into conflict, it

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sometimes proves impossible to obtain or enjoy one without having to do with less of, or go without, one of the others. The result is a dilemma — a hard choice.

The hard work — and it is hard work — of making tough choices demands frank, open, realistic, but civil talk among citizens.

It's impossible for *anyone*, when faced with a hard choice, to know for sure which of several good things should be given priority. In such situations, it's bad enough that a person feels torn between equally appealing (or unappealing) alternatives. The choice is doubly difficult because typically there's nowhere to turn for a definitive answer. There's no principle, no rule of thumb, no wise and benevolent authority who will tell a person what's best to do. One has to use one's own judgment — in effect, make up the rules as one goes.

If it's hard for an individual to resolve conflicts between good outcomes, think how tough it is for a community to reach a sound decision. In the absence of established guidelines for setting priorities, and given the variability of constitution and experience among individuals, it's not surprising that people differ considerably in their judgments about what good things ought to be favored in instances of conflict. So conflict between the things people *value* — conflict everyone experiences within himself — frequently underlies differences between *persons*. True, people can end up in disputes for all sorts of reasons — personality conflicts, injuries done by one to another, miscommunication, and so forth. But, an important source of conflict between persons (and hence between groups of persons) is the universal experience of conflict between things people value, an experience that occurs within each of us.

Community problems are thus *political* problems — problems that in their very nature elicit diverse and, often, conflicting responses. Calling such problems "political" doesn't mean that they necessarily have to be addressed by *government*. Nor does it mean that what we usually think of as "politics" — self-interested competition for advantage — causes these problems. What it means is that the problems we face in our communities reflect the fact that human responses to life are inherently diverse. It's this inherent diversity, and the conflict that flows naturally from it, that renders problems political.

If our response to the problems life throws at us is inescapably political, then the form of decision making we require in order to deal with those problems must itself be political. In short, we need *politics*. Specifically, we need the sort of *community* politics that enables and encourages us, as individuals and *as a community* to think about what we value, to recognize the consequences that will attend the various courses of action we might pursue, to decide what relative priorities we wish to establish, and to devise solutions that everyone can go along with. It is for the purpose of creating and sustaining this sort of politics that we require genuine community leadership.

Community Leadership

The "market" assumptions that have insinuated themselves into our efforts to address community problems prevent us from dealing with conflicts between the things we value. They keep us from reaching solutions to the problems we face collectively. Why? Because they obscure the fact that, in addition to particular interests, we have a shared interest in obtaining those public goods that only we, acting together, can produce. Because only citizens acting together can produce such goods, neutral decision-making principles, such as majority rule, do not suffice. Such rules can deal only mechanically with the competing interests and desires people have. They can aggregate them — add them up — but they can't integrate them — they can't reconcile the things that are important to people without compelling them to "win" or compromise. Only *people* can integrate conflicting interests.

A community leader sets out not to take charge, but to prompt people to reflect and ask themselves the right questions. He or she realizes that the solution is not outside the public, but within it.

Community problem solving requires a form of political interaction that is less adversarial than the sort that characterizes the market version of politics. The hard work — and it is hard work — of making tough choices demands frank, open, realistic, but civil talk among citizens. Only talk of this sort will build an integrated community perspective out of fragmented partial perspectives and, hence, create a basis for decisions that everyone can live with.

What conception of community leadership follows from this contention? Clearly, when public problems — racial tensions, drug abuse, poverty, crime, economic stagnation, environment pollution — arise, simply having the authority or power to influence public decisions doesn't guarantee that solutions will be effective or widely supported. Problems such as these require citizens to work together — to do the hard work of making choices based on a shared perspective. This suggests that community leadership is the ability to get people to work together to solve public problems. Specifically, it is the ability to help members of the community:

- define their problems from a shared, *public* perspective;
- recognize the costs and consequences of different courses of action;
- "work through" conflicting reactions to those consequences; and
- make the hard choices that every issue poses.

The purpose of leadership, in this view, is to improve the community's ability to understand the hard choices it must make and to work together toward a public judgment. A community leader sets out not to take charge, but to prompt people to reflect and ask themselves the right questions. He or she

realizes that the solution is not outside the public, but within it; what should be done becomes clear only as members of the community deliberate together.

A true community leader concentrates not on "empowering" others, but on alerting them to the capacities they already have. He or she doesn't assume the problem is already defined, but solicits a variety of perspectives and seeks to integrate them into a new, genuine community perspective on the problem. Such a person depersonalizes politics; such a person encourages people not to trust him/her — or each other — but only to work together to solve the problem everyone confronts. He doesn't play "hard ball," but works with allies and opponents alike.

A community leader doesn't come armed with facts, opinions, options, and plans, but with the know-how required for public deliberation. He or she faces up to hard choices rather than avoiding them, and calls the attention of his or her fellow citizens to the inescapability of those choices. He or she enables them to "work through" their own conflicting feelings about what should be done and helps them weigh their priorities fairly against those of their fellows. He/she encourages everyone to begin thinking *together* about which consequences are acceptable and which are not, and about which courses of action everyone can live with. He/she does not seek authority for himself/herself, but tries to disperse it among his/her fellow citizens. He/she works not for short-term gains and immediate results, but for the long-term goal of changing the way the community conducts its business.

Learning How to Lead

Community problem solving is a practical activity. It's an art, and like other arts, it rests on knowing *how* to do something. To learn the dispositions and skills — to acquire the know-how — needed to practice community problem solving, people must act. The feeling of empowerment that enables people to take effective action comes only with experience in dealing with real problems in actual situations.

A true community leader concentrates not on "empowering" others, but on alerting them to the capacities they already have.

If community problem solving can be learned only by acting with other members of the community, then community *leaders* must begin — and end — as ordinary *citizens*. If would-be problem solvers don't learn the dispositions and skills that every citizen must acquire through experience, they will be in no position to assist others in developing the know-how that community problem solving requires. A community leader is nothing more, then, than a citizen who has developed this know-how well enough to foster, through example, its development in his fellows.

Indeed, a community leader will never cease being a citizen. Having learned his civic dispositions and skills as a member of the public, he will understand that a person

who is not immersed in the community cannot lead it. A community leader is one who helps the community find *its* voice and set *its* direction. Without being well integrated into that body of citizens, a would-be leader cannot know what the community thinks and what it wishes to do.

We Have Met Our Leaders, and They Are Us

Is there reason to hope that we can transform the public life of our communities — render it more like the conception of community problem solving described above and less like the market conception that currently dominates our public world? The 1991 Kettering Foundation report, *Citizens and Politics*, suggests there is. Although Americans express irritation and dismay about public life, many remain actively involved in addressing the problems that concern them. When they have a real chance to have an effect on these problems, citizens take the lead in addressing them.

This isn't surprising. As political analyst William Schneider has observed, most Americans are pragmatists. They believe that what works is right. And at some level they understand that, in the end, only citizens can make a democracy work. As a recent political cartoon put it, "We the People of the United States . . . are still in charge of making it work." The point is, the leaders we seek are among us already — we are the leaders our democracy requires. When at last we assume our rightful position at the head of the public that we ourselves constitute, we will prove the wisdom of Lao Tze: We will have first-rate leaders — and we will have done it all ourselves.

Michael Briand is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio.

The Political Language of Social Leaders

by Manfred Stanley

This essay reports on some of the results of 43 interviews held with active citizens of Centertown, a small city in upstate New York currently taking steps to recover from a general economic decline. The method of selecting subjects for our interviews was not based on any statistical sampling procedure. Subjects were largely well-educated business and professional people who took an active part in the affairs of their community. A minimum criterion for selection was service on the boards of at least two volunteer associations. The group was 80 percent male and more than two-thirds were over the age of 50.

Women were clearly underrepresented in this informally selected group. We cannot, of course, know whether a less gender-skewed sample would have changed the conclusions we reached, but whether the views of highly active business and professional women, age 50 and over, would differ markedly from those of their male counterparts is at least open to question. It should also be noted that the interviews reported here took place before the major economic upheavals which have taken place in this country, and in the world, in the last few years. Recent trends might well have changed the perspectives of our interviewees, though this would not necessarily have led us to fundamentally altered conclusions.

Our purpose in interviewing this loose cross section of Centertown's active citizens was to hold a conversation with them about their understanding of their work and their community. We were looking for continuities and discontinuities between this community and others like it. What is reported here by no means exhausts the material from these interviews. The focus in this essay is on those interview outcomes most relevant for anyone interested in the organization of civic forums in a town such as this.

The Nature of Leadership and the Role of Political Parties

The concept of leadership that emerges from these interviews can be characterized by three generalizations.

First, real leaders are those who initiate action not primarily out of self-interest, but out of a statesmanlike concern for the good of

the whole. What moves this generalization beyond banality is the complex attitudes present in citizens' minds about what self-interest means. Self-interest does not end with the idea of making money or fulfilling material ambitions. Self-interest is also taken to mean something psychologically corrupt; an overriding desire to make oneself look good at the expense of others that takes the form of misusing language, distorting information, and wrongly interpreting events. A term that is often used in this connection is partisanship. The citizens we interviewed consider partisanship to be a politics of manipulation: manipulation of status, of illusions, and of emotions. Real leaders are expected to be free of partisanship, though not of party affiliation. Attitudes toward the press become involved here as we shall see later. For now, let me add that in opposing a politics of partisanship, active citizens often defend a politics of market forces; that is to say, they praise leaders who try to arrange for conditions of productivity, effective competition, and stability for investment. Market forces are regarded as real in a way that other things often are not. Hence the concept of partisanship seems reserved for issues regarded as not fully real.

The second generalization we found regarding the good leader is that he or she is one who knows when people have some degree of freedom to act with initiative, as opposed to a situation in which things are out of control and must simply be adapted to. Again, it sounds obvious. But what people mean by "out of control" is rather less obvious. We find two distinct ideas about this term in our interviews. First, something is out of control when its origins are perceived as outside of the community. The two prime examples given were foreign affairs and the evolution of the capitalist economy itself. Virtually nowhere in our interviews is there a sign that anyone thinks he or she can do much of anything about matters such as the threat of nuclear war, or the long-term external conditions that led to plant closings in Centertown. The second sense of how something can be out of control is when it becomes "public" in the stigmatized sense of partisan emotions and abstractions. National politics are often perceived as hopelessly out of control in both these senses. This suggests an ambivalent attitude toward citizenship.

As citizens, many seem to believe that there is little they can do about world labor-market trends and the role of multinational corporations in setting those trends. Nor can they affect large-scale poverty or the actions of Third World countries. There seems little point in discussing the details of defense contract policy, Strategic Defense Initiative, arms control, or the character of weapons systems. What *is* open to us, the interviewees seem to say, is how we locally adapt to these forces and the attitudes we bring to these efforts. This is reflected especially in comments about language. Many respondents are very conscious of how language (even spe-

National politics are often perceived as hopelessly out of control.

cific words) mediate emotions like hope, apathy, despair, or aspiration. Yet the sharp distinction between local issues and those "over the horizon" makes for a kind of economy of effort among citizen leaders. Practical people are perceived as those who work within the confines of the community to make it more competitive. There were no references to a standard of leadership based on helping people understand how collective efforts to change national and international policies could alter local realities. It wasn't that people rejected this notion of leadership. It just never came up. Perhaps that is what national elections are considered to be about. Yet the statistics of American voting, of which many of our respondents seemed aware, show that our present national voting rate is one of the lowest both in the Western world and in our own national history. At any rate, the theme of things out of control is a real one among Centertown social leaders. It affects people's sense of the boundaries of citizenship itself. The boundaries seem for many quite constrained.

There seemed little spontaneous interest in the divisions presently existing within the two national parties.

The third generalization to be drawn from our interviews on the subject of leadership is that the best leaders are those who work in private. The concept of "private" here is rather subtle. It does not mean the opposite of public. People do not wish to lead or be led in secret from locked rooms and coded files. Rather, in this context, people seem to mean by private a form of public life. Aristotle referred to the importance of citizens "knowing each other's character." This was one of the criteria for what he meant by "civic friendship." The idea that citizens need to know each other's character in order to exercise self-government with justice was used in arguments by Anti-Federalists against ratification of the new U.S. Constitution in 1787. They felt that the Constitution created a form of government too remote from local communities, thereby destroying the principle that only those who know each other well can safely represent each other. Without the hostility to our Constitution, it is exactly this attitude that prevails among the social leaders we interviewed in Centertown.

In this context, a word on the perception of political parties is in order. The interviews contain evidence for the view that Centertown, as a place with its own characteristics and history, makes a difference in the contours of public opinion and its effect on the character of the local branches of the two major political parties. There is general consensus that Centertown would be regarded by most people as more conservative than some other places, most notably New York City. Interviewees largely agree that local Republicans and Democrats do not differ in truly major ways; there is rather less agreement over whether these parties differ much on the national level. These responses are not accompanied by much thinking on the historic ideological divisions within our national political culture. Basically, the stereotypes come across

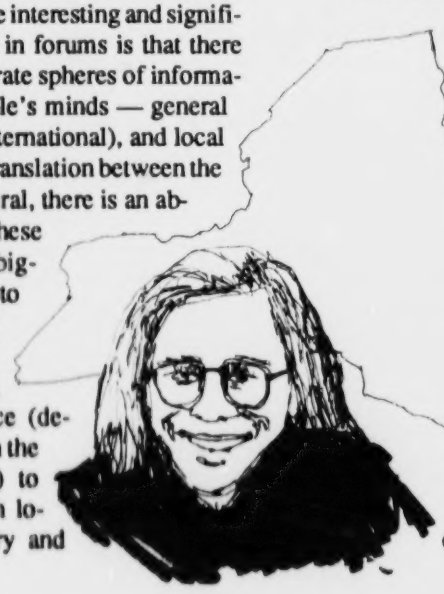
in the interviews that Democrats want to spend money so that government can solve social problems, while Republicans want to leave things to market forces. There seemed little spontaneous interest in the divisions presently existing within the two national parties.

Perspectives on Information and Its Sources

The interviews attempted to explore people's sources of information about public affairs. What emerged as well were some insights for us on how these community leaders conceive of information and its uses.

Interviewees seek their information from a variety of sources that are fairly predictable for this category of people: the *New York Times*, the popular news journals, work-related magazines and newsletters, local newspapers and, of course, television and radio. What is perhaps more interesting and significant for our interest in forums is that there seem to be two separate spheres of information sources in people's minds — general (i.e., national and international), and local — with rather little translation between the two spheres. In general, there is an absence of effort in these interviews to use big-picture information to interpret public issues on the local level. For example, there is no reference (despite opportunities in the interview schedule) to interactions between local economic history and national/international public policy issues having to do with multinational corporations such as the freedom of companies to use competing labor forces in cheap labor countries to undercut union power in the United States. Issues of protectionism and so-called industrial policy were not alluded to as in any way relevant to local issues. Similarly, issues of nuclear war and defense policy, with their connection to expenditures competing with other public needs, were barely raised.

It is not that people were uninformed about such matters (although little was said about them). It is that there was little if any effort to make connections between these "macro" issues and the "micro" life of the community. The result seems to be a sort of phenomenological division between active and passive (or direct and indirect) citizenship. Active, direct citizenship is possible on the local scene, through one's networks of occupational and social life and the opportunities these afford for the exercise of political/social responsibility. On the level of national and international affairs, one seems condemned to more passive citizenship, indirectly exercised through one's right to vote for national candidates and their vaguely announced policies. There being a general feeling of helplessness about such larger issues, big-picture news seems acquired as part of one's duty as a community leader to be oriented



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to the world at large. But it appears not to be part of the self-expectation of these leaders to analyze their attitudes toward and knowledge of national or international affairs for the sake of translating them into civic action on the local level — or to try to make the local community more aware of how its history is affected by what Americans do on the national and international level. Rather, the latter seems over the horizon, as it were, beyond the power of local people to affect.

It is in this context that interviewee attitudes toward the press seem most interesting to think about. The interviews reveal mixed feelings toward the press, sometimes within a single person. The press comes across as a good source of news, but also as specializing in unreliable information. This notion of unreliability is not simply an abstraction intoned to punish the bearer of bad tidings. Rather, unreliable news means news unvalidated by intimate contact with sources and contexts of information. The press appears to be viewed as catering to "outsiders" remote from the inner councils of the responsible citizenry; to masses hungry for entertainment and gossip; to partisans looking for ideological ammunition. Because the economics of journalism requires all these audiences, the press is said to induce a need for "hard" definitions of things, a need for "taking sides," a need for "abstract" versions of what happens in the world. Our respondents mostly had a view of events not as hard-edged news, but as nuanced, multidimensional and fluid phenomena, hard to classify, but possible to talk about among trusted intimates.

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Political Language in Centertown

The notion of ambivalent or multivalent meanings is part of the conventional wisdom regarding all discourse. People always mean more than one thing by the words they use. In the analysis of these interview results, we focus on four master concepts, three out of the vocabulary of politics and one, "reality," because it seems to us that there are two basic notions of reality that people brought into these interviews.

The first is "popular sovereignty," upon which our system of government is supposedly based. Our interviews reveal two versions of that concept. One is egalitarian with the emphasis on populist standards of political participation. This view is barely, if at all, represented in our interviews. The other version is a more hierarchical view of popular sovereignty according to which representatives worthy of the term "statespersons" exercise the duties of responsible leadership for the rest of us. This view is heavily represented in the interviews.

The term "public" is naturally central to any conception of politics. We find in our interviews at least two different notions of

what it means for something to "go public." One is a praiseworthy meaning, the other a stigmatized one; both are present in people's vocabularies. The praiseworthy version of public, for most of our respondents, refers to the citizen-insiders who are fit to represent and lead the rest of us. The other sense of public is what one is tempted to refer to with that old aristocratic term, the "mob." No one today would dream of using such a word in interviews (although the word "masses" is not unknown). But the tone is there. What is meant by this stigmatized sense of public is "outsiders" to the responsible councils of authority. It does not seem to be restricted to the poor who, indeed, appear to play barely any role in this dramaturgy. The outsider public often is middle class: people who profit economically or psychologically from "partisanship." They are uninformed, not in the sense of being bereft of information, but in having the wrong sort. They don't know what the insiders know or, if they do, they know it in abstract and distorted forms. To be an insider, according to most of our interviews, is to know things in a subtle way, concretely, nonabstractly, in ways that defy easy partisanship. The outsider public, in some important sense, even if organized, is a public of strangers.

This brings us to the concept of "politics" itself. We have spoken above of the concept of partisanship as a politics of status rituals, illusions, and emotions. Other than the general rhetoric of responsible behavior, our respondents were not as clear about what they meant by the opposite of partisanship. The interviews as a whole, however, lead us to posit a type of politics as the opposite of partisanship for which we borrow the German term *realpolitik*. The term connotes an amoral, hardheaded, coldly pragmatic approach to politics undiluted by sentiment. In a very broad sense, so as to include the concept of unending economic competition as a sort of state-of-nature condition, the term is militaristic in orientation. Understood in this way, we believe the interviews present us with Centertown leaders as predominantly holding to this concept of politics, especially those among them who are of the business elite. Political responsibility is enacted in the domain of market forces. For it is here in which people's livelihoods are at stake, in which the destiny of community is to be found, in which freedom and initiative can effectively be dramatized.

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It seems a bit grandiose to end with reference to a term like social "reality." However, our interviews supply evidence from which may be inferred the presence of two different conceptions of social reality among our interviewees. Sometimes these coexist within the same person, depending on what is being talked about. One conception of reality seems

based on the assumption that reality is objective, that is, that social life has a nature of its own. We find this assumption most present in comments pertaining to the vicissitudes of the national and international economy as a whole; it is also obliquely present in comments that presuppose a human nature against whose irrational manifestations and impulses responsible leaders must mobilize their wisdom, patience, and rationality.

The other conception of social reality seems to be subjective. This means that people sometimes speak as if social reality is an outcome of the interplay of individual attitudes as reflected in collective vocabularies of hope, apathy, and political definition. This notion of reality seems present when people express strong feelings about the uses of language per se. These feelings reflect the view that how things are named somehow constitutes an important part of their reality, as in the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy. This subjective notion of reality is present when people worry about whether the term "problem" or "opportunity" is used with reference to community issues. It likewise accompanies concern with the role of the press in the formation of public consciousness.

Overall, our findings reflect orientations long identified in the community sociology literature as characteristic of the social leaders of American communities. All the contradictions we have identified are as old as the great constitutional ratification debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists in the eighteenth century. This does not mean, however, that these insights have been incorporated systematically into forum pedagogies throughout the long American history of this institution. For them to be so requires that we conceive of forum members less as consumers bringing "value" preferences to the policy market, than as social/historical beings whose cognitive and emotional representations of how the world works are, in part, products of their location in the overall structure of society.

Manfred Stanley is professor of sociology and director of the Center for the Study of Citizenship at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. The interviews reported here are part of a larger multiyear research and civic education project in Centertown.

Citizenship and Leadership

by Daniel Kemmis

As chair of the National League of Cities' Leadership Training Council, I, along with my fellow council members, have struggled mightily with the question of how leadership might be taught. We recognize that there are certain basic skills of administration, such as budgeting and planning that any municipal official should possess and that any comprehensive system of leadership training should therefore provide. But, it seems to me that if the National League of Cities is going to put itself to the trouble of creating a Leadership Training Council, it should offer more than nuts and bolts. It should, in fact, be offering leadership to the field of leadership training — a kind of leadership to the second power. What would such an undertaking look like in the context of training municipal leaders? What meaning might it have in a broader context: the education of citizen leaders?

Most leadership is marked by a sense of timeliness, an appreciation, either trained or instinctive, for what the times require or will sustain. Our times have been marked by political turbulence. We have all borne fascinated witness to the great democratic upheavals which have transformed political landscapes in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. If America can take some credit for shaping these world-shaking events, it rests on our long-standing claim as the global beacon of democracy. As many see it, our role now is to teach others what we know about democracy. But there is something disconcerting about this presumption when the statistics on voter turnout and public confidence in government prove that our own democratic culture is showing every evidence of decline. That evidence has been brilliantly marshaled in such recent works as E. J. Dionne, Jr.'s *Why Americans Hate Politics*, and Richard Harwood's widely acclaimed report to the Kettering Foundation on the state of our political culture.

I am absolutely convinced that no amount of procedural reform, whether in the form of term limits, campaign finance reform, proportional representation, or "motor voter" accessibility will have the slightest effect on this democratic decline. The one change that will reverse this negative momentum will be the revitalization of citizenship. It is only

here that truly effective leadership is now possible.

It is a measure of how far democracy has declined that this word, "citizenship" has itself become flat and uninteresting, so that we can hardly imagine what a revitalization of citizenship might mean. In the era of the nation-state, with democracy wrenched from the human-scale locus which was its native home, we have also abstracted citizenship from its roots and, in the process, stripped it of its capacity to sustain a true practice of democracy. I don't believe we can reclaim either the word or the practice until we remind ourselves of its primal meaning. In other words, to go forward, we may be well served by looking briefly backward.

A citizen was initially a city dweller, one whose shape and identity were drawn from the city, as a lion is shaped and given identity by the jungle; a citizen was a denizen of the city — a "city-zen." A democratic citizen was one who was given the opportunity and the responsibility to help shape and give identity to the city which, in turn, had shaped and identified that citizen. Never has this mutual shaping of city and citizen been more aptly described than by Pericles of Athens, in his Funeral Oration.

Pericles' assigned duty was to praise the Athenian soldiers who had fallen in an early battle of the Peloponnesian War, but he surprised his listeners by starting with a description of the city itself. His purpose was not only to show what the fallen soldiers had sacrificed *for*, but to argue that their very capacity for sacrifice, the form their courage took, had been shaped by the city — and that indeed this was true of other virtues, whether they be tolerance or justice or the remarkable aesthetic qualities, which were just then producing the great works on the Acropolis. Whatever Athenians justly claimed as marks of individual distinction, Pericles argued, they owed to the city. But what set Athens apart from the other Greek cities was that the reverse of this was also true: that what Athens had achieved was not the work of the privileged few, but of the multitude of citizens who, in taking responsibility for the common good, had made Athens at once the birthplace of democracy and what Pericles called an "everlasting memorial of the good."

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Political correctness demands that we remind ourselves how far Athenian democracy fell short of contemporary standards, given the many classes of people excluded from Athenian citizenship. We could not, today, call such an exclusive system a true democracy. But, we will never get beyond our own misplaced smugness about our role as the "beacon of democracy" until we confront the inescapable fact that Pericles would have found our democracy at least as deficient as we find his. His complaint would not be about the lack of breadth in our democracy,

but the lack of depth. Above all, he would be amazed to hear people call themselves democrats who define the duties of citizenship as superficially as we now do.

Many Americans customarily refer to themselves as "taxpayers," a designation which now regularly holds the place which in a true democracy would be occupied by "citizens." Taxpayers bear a dual relationship to government, neither half of which has anything at all to do with democracy. Taxpayers pay tribute to the government, and they receive services from it. So does every subject of a totalitarian regime. What taxpayers do not do, and what people who call themselves taxpayers rather than citizens have long since stopped even imagining themselves doing, is governing.

If we do use the word "citizen," it is almost certain either to be part of the phrase "concerned citizen" (as if citizenship were essentially a form of grievance) or part of the hopelessly confused phrase "private citizen" — the civic equivalent of dry water. Standing by itself, as it rarely does, the word "citizen" evokes all the weariness and unhappiness we associate with public life. Most of us would not enthusiastically call ourselves "citizens."

To reclaim some of the primal energy of citizenship, consider again the remarkable achievement of Athenian democracy. The Athenians were deeply divided along class and ideological lines, and they pursued their different agendas with great energy and ingenuity. But, it is said that democracy established its historic foothold there primarily because, in spite of these differences, most Athenians "cared more about Athens than they cared about winning."

This is precisely where the cutting edge of democracy in America lies today. Whenever people are given a realistic opportunity to prove in effective practice that they care more about their own city's good than they care about a narrow factional victory, they respond to that challenge with an energy and enthusiasm which proves that citizenship, however profaned, has never expired. The role of leadership is to tap this vast slumbering human potential.

This brings us directly into the domain of leadership education. At all levels, but crucially at the fundamental level of the city-state or city-region, citizenship will emerge as the most important political office, carrying responsibilities no less serious than those of any elected office.

Like any important and responsible position, this office of citizenship requires a specific set of skills. Many of them are skills for which our current practice of politics prepares us very poorly. Above all, the capacity to work constructively with people of different social or economic classes, or those from different ideological backgrounds, is not

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something which decades of interest group politics have prepared us to do well. Citizens who would practice the politics of collaborative problem solving must patiently teach themselves skills of problem framing, of listening, and of speaking so that they may be heard.

The kind of politics that an expanded practice of citizenship makes possible requires new skills from politicians as well.

But, it is not only citizens who must learn new behavior patterns. The kind of politics that an expanded practice of citizenship makes possible requires new skills from politicians as well. It is not that power ceases to be a consideration for politicians. I am convinced that some form of entrepreneurship of power is and may always be the essence of politics. But the garnering, risking, reaping, and reinvesting of power in a setting defined primarily by competing interest groups, becomes a different game altogether as more and more citizen leaders take upon themselves the task of "caring more about Athens than they care about winning."

Citizens trained in this kind of thinking are likely to see political power as receiving its legitimacy from its capacity to enhance the common good. The entrepreneurship of power then comes into focus as a stewardship which the politician exercises on behalf of the public. As citizens take on more responsibility for the common good, the politicians find themselves sharing the stewardship of power with a broader circle of attentive actors and, simultaneously, drawing power from that very sharing. Here the education of the politician becomes crucial, as an essentially zero-sum view of power (whatever power you have is power I don't have) is challenged by an understanding that the sharing of power not only increases the community's capacity to do what it chooses to do, but also makes each political actor more potent.

What is crucial is that politicians and citizens must learn together. Citizen leaders, for example, need to understand how helpful political leaders can be in convening diverse groups and interests to work together on a common problem or opportunity. The wisest of these citizen leaders must be brought to recognize that in so doing, a politician may risk his or her limited stock of political capital, not least because in convening a diversity of interests, the politician is implicitly challenging the axiom upon which interest group politics operates: that my supporters are right and their adversaries are wrong. This shift of one's political weight from a known interest group base to a much more diverse base of citizens is a dangerous step for a politician to take; the capital put at risk will only pay dividends if the citizen leaders actually succeed at collaboration. The political leader, therefore, has a stake in the education of citizen leaders in those basic skills which make collaboration likely to succeed.

This, then, seems to be the arena within which leadership education might occur in this decade. What useful generalizations might we make about such education?

First, as with most difficult practices, there is no substitute for the role of effective mentoring Across the country, wise political and citizen leaders are advancing the practice of citizen-based democracy. A key to effective education is to take the time to identify effective role models, and then create opportunities for them to mentor others.

Second, the teaching, in most cases if not all, should involve both citizen leaders and political leaders, because they share so integrally the responsibility for nurturing democracy.

Third, we need to be clear about how much we don't know about this work, or to put it more positively, how much new knowledge is replacing received wisdom. This means that the task of education should contain an explicit component of structured interchange between political and citizen practitioners and the communitarian or republican theorists. The potential for mutual instruction between these two groups has barely been touched. Leaders in leadership training would insist upon cultivating this fertile intersection.

Fourth, the time has come to pay as much attention to teaching politics as we now pay to teaching ethics. It should be a core requirement in our colleges. I do not mean political science, in which I was trained, only to learn that politics is far more art than science, and I certainly do not mean public administration, invaluable as that discipline has become. I mean politics as a genuinely humanistic discipline, worthy of democracy. Aristotle was no democrat, but his understanding that ethics was only effective if pursued as a preface to politics should be an article of faith for any truly democratic people. When better to give politics this role in education than now, when the revitalization of citizenship requires us to redefine politics as if it were something in which ordinary people could be proudly engaged, but in which they must first be effectively educated?

Fifth, and finally, in both theory and practice, we need to bring back into focus the fundamental relationship between the city and the citizen. We might sometimes want to substitute another word like "community" for "city" in this equation, but whatever word we choose must carry a concrete, human-scale significance which avoids the deadly trap of thinking that citizenship, and therefore democracy, is a purely formal matter which can be enacted in any size of polity. Democracy has no meaning except its human meaning; a formal democracy which is not humanly engaging is a perversion of the very idea of democracy. Far too much of what we call democracy, especially at the national level, has become this kind of perversion. Meanwhile, within cities and towns, and increasingly within city-regions, people are learning again the hard-earned pleasures of doing productive civic work together. As

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they slowly but steadily heal the places they inhabit, repairing a riverside here, a neighborhood park there, city and citizen find themselves growing stronger together, and more and more people understand from their own experience what Pericles meant when he referred to citizens as those "worthy of their city."

Pericles is himself an inexhaustible education in leadership, and nowhere is his teaching more applicable to us than in his understanding that the city was the best possible teacher of citizenship. Pericles' praise of his city approached its climax in his declaration that Athens had become "an education to Greece." The city could only claim this role because it had learned that it could be an education to itself.

Here, to an extent that we in our time can barely grasp, lay the seed-crystal of Athenian democracy. Athens realigned history not, as we imagine, by the institution of a new form of government, but rather through the brilliant and daring intuition that if the responsibility to care for the city was broadly shared, people would respond, as bodies or minds always do, to the challenge of good training by becoming stronger, more agile, and more self-confident. Faced with the appalling waste of human potential which the manifold failures of our society have wrought, the role of leadership is to see that the forward path goes not by way of new programs or procedural reforms, but by putting once again within the reach and care of citizens the responsibility to do well together by the places they call home.

Daniel Kemmis is mayor of Missoula, Montana, and former Speaker of the Montana House of Representatives. Mayor Kemmis is the chairman of the National League of Cities' Leadership Training Council. He is the author of Community and the Politics of Place, *and is currently at work on a second book,* The Good City and the Good Life.

Citizen Leadership and Service-Learning

by Cecil D. Bradfield and R. Ann Myers

One of the ironies of our time is that while we have increased our emphasis on leadership education, examples of public leadership are scarce. Citizens often seek in vain for evidence of leadership on the part of candidates for public office, business and community leaders, even religious leaders. Our communities lack citizen leaders who are willing to put the common good before their own rights or interests. At our colleges and universities, we offer students opportunities for leadership in organizations, course work, and institutional decision making, but many leave the campus feeling inadequate to the task of citizen leadership.

What are the attributes needed for citizen leadership? Citizen leaders must have the desire to engage the community in a positive and empowering manner. They must acquire understanding of programs, agencies, communities, and society. They must learn the skills needed to work with others toward community-building and empowerment of individuals within them. Academic institutions are charged with educating students so these attributes become second nature after graduation.

This essay profiles the development of a program of service-learning designed to contribute to the holistic education and citizen leadership preparation of students at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It will show how the Center for Service-Learning (CSL) affects the overall culture of the institution to create an environment compatible with the development of citizen leaders. While service-learning is certainly not the only means for developing citizen leadership, it is an intentional venture to engage the students and faculty in community-building.

The Institutional Environment

James Madison University is a comprehensive coeducational institution. Founded in 1908 as a state school for women, it now has an undergraduate enrollment of 11,400. The university consists of six colleges and offers 60 undergraduate and 31 advanced degree programs.

In 1985, JMU began a thorough review of the curriculum. In addition to looking at the relationship of the curriculum to the development of cognitive skills, considerable atten-

tion was given to the noncognitive or affective development of students. The review also critically examined the kinds of learning students were experiencing outside the classroom. It was in this context that the proposal for a Center for Service-Learning emerged.

The center began as a joint venture between the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs. From the beginning, there was a clear interest in developing openings for relating the curricular and cocurricular programs of the university to the community. CSL's current mission statement reflects this viewpoint:

> The Center will promote and facilitate opportunities which encourage student and faculty engagement in the larger community. It will promote social responsibility, provide curricular and cocurricular opportunities, and foster mutually beneficial relationships which are consistent with the public service mission of the university (adopted March, 1992).

A Desire to Engage the Community

Citizen leaders must have a desire to engage the community. Much has been written about the "me" generation of the past decade. A great deal has been said about young people whose narrow definition of success relates largely to income and the ability to buy happiness. At James Madison we are seeing a shift in this orientation as about 45 percent of our incoming freshmen have specific community service experience. Special CSL recruiting efforts highlight the importance of community involvement as part of a total university experience. Freshmen attend a CSL information session that is part of a series devoted to giving new students an overview of cocurricular and extracurricular opportunities at the university.

About half the students who engage in service-learning as part of a course requirement, return to the activity the next semester. . . . More often than not, they participate actively in their communities after they leave school.

All freshmen enroll in a Freshmen Seminar designed to "promote the ethic of lifelong learning; to develop the skills of analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, informed discussion, and writing to establish a common ground of understanding and values through knowledge of our cultural heritage."

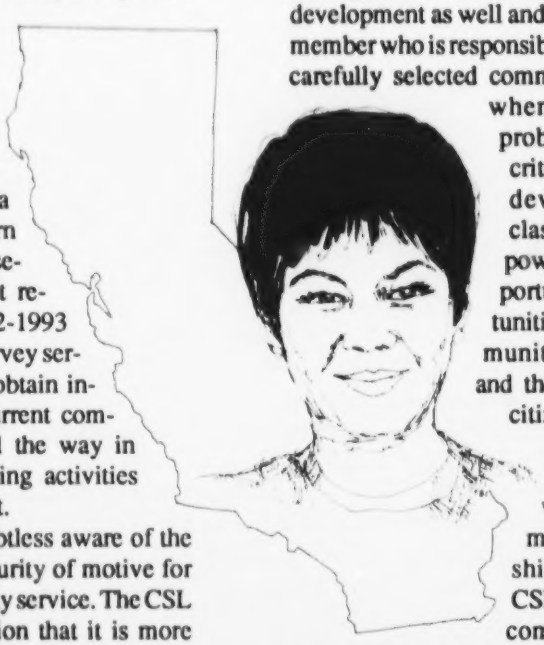
During 1991-1992, 16 sessions of the seminar had service-learning segments. Most often, these involved a minimum number of hours of commitment to one of 68 CSL-approved community agencies. Student experiences became part of the seminar discussions. In addition, the students engaged in journaling and reflection. Several videotaped reflection sessions served as an introduction to the experience. While a number of students reported an initial reluctance to engage in the service-learning project, most rated the experience positively by the end of the semester.

Focus groups are being formed for faculty

to reflect on and improve the quality of the service-learning experience in the Freshman Seminar. Another aim for these sessions is to encourage faculty to visit and participate in the placements with their students and thereby engage in co-service learning.

About half the students who engage in service-learning as part of a course requirement return to the activity the next semester although it is not required. During the 1992-1993 academic year we will survey service-learning alumni to obtain information about their current community involvement and the way in which past service-learning activities relate to that involvement.

Many readers are doubtless aware of the continuing debate over purity of motive for involvement in community service. The CSL operates on the assumption that it is more productive to focus efforts on competent structuring of the service-learning program and the outcomes rather than on motivation. If the service-learning organization provides a sound motivational and peer support structure, and emphasizes faculty and placement development, then students will have a positive outcome. More often than not, they participate actively in their communities after they leave school.



Designing the Curriculum

A significant development in the community service movement is the emphasis on connecting service with the curriculum. From its beginning, the CSL has promoted curriculum development as the model for a service-learning program. The CSL promotes faculty development as well and appoints a faculty member who is responsible for this effort. A carefully selected community placement, when connected to problem-solving and critical-thinking skills developed in the classroom, creates a powerful learning opportunity. Such opportunities enhance community understanding and the development of citizen leadership as students can observe and work with community mentors in leadership positions. All CSL placements have community mentors who understand the rationale for a service-learning program from the university perspective and are trained to work with students.

The CSL has developed several models for integrating community service with the curriculum, including dedicated courses and seminars, and required or optional components within courses. A seminar in Appalachia takes students to Clay County, Kentucky, for a three-week work camp and seminar. Faculty leaders and students work together in a variety of community placements. A course entitled Volunteerism in American

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Society requires students to engage extensively in community volunteer work.

The more common academic model is one in which service-learning is a part of a regular course. This occurs in a wide variety of majors. A CSL-sponsored workshop helps faculty redesign courses to make community service an integral part of the offering. Students learn more and rate the service-learning experience more highly when they perceive it as an integrated part of the course or seminar rather than as an add-on.

It is time for the service-learning movement to go beyond values clarification, self-satisfaction, career enhancement, and community understanding to community-building and empowerment.

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) module for courses encourages students to conduct an organizational analysis while engaging in service-learning. PAR provides students with a set of structured questions that helps them reflect on their community service experience. Pedagogically, it allows for a good balance between structured learning and active, self-generated learning. The PAR module has been used in an honors section of Introductory Sociology, an issues seminar entitled Homeless in America, and an interdisciplinary Pre-Field Workshop. It will soon be available to colleagues at JMU, and eventually to other institutions.

Community-Building and Empowerment

The CSL has moved from engaging students in community service projects, to helping them build on skills developed in the classroom, to cultivating lifelong skills for community-building. The next step in this process is to be more intentional in teaching students how these skills are translated into action for community-building. In short, it is time for the service-learning movement to go beyond values clarification, self-satisfaction, career enhancement, and community understanding to community-building and empowerment.

Empowerment was the theme in a recent Homeless in America seminar in which students engaged in 30 hours of service-learning. All placements involved the issue of housing and homelessness. Students were not surprised to find that the homeless considered themselves disempowered. But, unexpectedly, students themselves felt disempowered in addressing the homeless issue. This revelation encouraged them to consider various options for dealing with the issue. They became committed to the achievement of adequate housing for all citizens through community action. As a result of consciousness-raising from that involvement, one student and several of her friends formed a very successful campus organization called H.O.U.S.E. This organization organizes student activities and advocacy with the homeless.

CSL encourages faculty members to build cooperative learning around their students' placement experiences. In addition to working together at the placement site, students

reflect on the experience and "report back" to their classes on what they have learned. They become teachers to their peers. An understanding of cooperative group processes is important for citizen leaders who will work with others for the common good.

During the 1991-1992 year, the CSL promoted campuswide activities aimed at understanding and developing citizenship education and leadership. The endeavors were given focus by a visiting scholar who met with several classes, conducted workshops for faculty, and made a campuswide presentation. An ad hoc group will form next year to inventory the various ways citizenship education is already taking place on campus, and to explore new ways to encourage informed and caring community-building.

Recent surveys show that students who engage in service-learning perceive that they are developing or enhancing their leadership skills. James Madison University is now developing a Center for Leadership Education modeled after the Center for Service-Learning as a cooperative venture between the divisions of Academic and Student Affairs.

The 1990s will be a challenging era for higher education. Americans are looking to higher education for answers in addressing pressing societal needs. We have only begun to understand what that will mean to the academy. Institutions are being asked to give life to their public service missions, and to engage in real community-building. Service-learning is a part of that response and in some cases may lead institutions to rediscover their role in community-building. In this process, the academy will take more seriously its mandate to create an atmosphere which promotes the development of citizen leaders.

Cecil Bradfield is professor of sociology and coordinator of the Center for Service-Learning at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. R. Ann Myers heads the Social Work Department at James Madison University. Bradfield and Myers are co-founders of the Center for Service-Learning.

Citizen Leaders for a New Politics

by Peter Bearse

Nomen est numen. To name is to know. If we attempt to coin a new name — "citizen leader" — how shall we know this most recent entry into the political arena? Will it help us to understand the nature of a new politics in which the citizen leader is a chief practitioner?

Citizen leaders are, first, citizens according to the classical, root meaning of the word — public citizens, not the apocryphal "private citizens," of present-day parlance. And, we can know them by their actions. In various guises, we see them almost daily. They are among our friends and neighbors. One guise is Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror." Whether leading demonstrations for peace, the homeless, or "Farm Aid," delivering piles of petitions for the Perot campaign, or organizing Earth Day observances or church suppers, they are public citizens, attending to public business, creating and re-creating community. This is the "public," at the grass roots or local levels where most of us can see and feel the fruits of our activities with others, a degree of empowerment outside the home.

If the "Man in the Mirror" is the model for citizen leader, is he, like most of us, politically alienated? If we can answer this question, then we may be able to define a new politics. The true citizen leader cannot be defined out of context. We need to paint a picture in which citizen leaders appear as primary political actors. What's wrong with the picture now? We don't see them in it. Defining a citizen leader is primarily a matter of drawing a new political picture, not trying to insert a new entry into *Webster's Dictionary*. It is a matter of political dynamics, not semantics. A picture in which a figure comes to life necessarily has both foreground and background. A new politics requires citizen leaders to be clearly in the picture; and vice versa. Without a new politics, the citizen leader, like a fish out of water, cannot exist for long.

Current diagnoses of American politics pay scant attention to local politics and government. American political culture, however, is profoundly local. Because of this, the corruption of local politics and decline of local democracy has infected all our politics.

The latter point is both contrary to conventional wisdom and basic to this essay. Myth has it that American democracy is alive and well because it is rooted in local democracy,

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which is alive and well. Sickness unto death may be a more apt description. Local politics is a low-level caricature of what American state and national politics have become: personality, interest group, "what's in it for me," "now generation," "one hand greases the other," "go-along/get-along," "empty suit," politics. Local politics is basically incestuous. Local government is oligarchic rather than democratic.

Perhaps this has always been so and may even continue to be so into the indefinite future. Why worry? In an era of national and international politics, local politics might be viewed as having little, if any, significance. The problem is that the decline of party politics, along with greed, corruption, and shortsightedness has made a shambles of local politics. Some of its worst features have been transported to higher levels, where they cannot be detected in the "smoke and mirrors" of state and national politics.

Can we realistically expect to improve our national politics without attending to the reform of politics and government at the local level? This key question does not appear to have been asked by recent commentators concerned for the quality of our political life. It is as if an implicit contrary assumption is lurking in the background.

One can only wonder why. Do the leaders and participants in focus groups, community forums, and other experiments in democracy really believe the myth of American democracy — that it rests on local involvement in politics, and that local politics is alive and well? Lewis Lapham's articles in *Harper's* and the *Kettering Review* clearly imply that the myth is dead. Voting statistics do not support it. Voter turnouts increase with each level of government. The myth that local government is closer to the people, where people are more likely to pay attention and get involved, no longer has any basis in fact.

Models

"Fact" notwithstanding, what about the ideal? The motivating power of an ideal can be the most important political fact of all. The ideal of local democracy is the politics of participation — a more intimate, people-to-people engagement with issues and each other in order to identify shared problems and construct shared solutions. The town meeting is the model. Such engagement is a form of empowerment that some consider more powerful than voting. The ideal is not an end but a means, a process. We need to learn to value differences over sameness, innovation over conformity. In the words of theologian Stanley Hauerwas, it is "necessary for me to recognize the difference of my neighbor not as a threat but as essential for my very life."

The ideal provides a sharp contrast with reality. The latter is exemplified by public

hearings on local issues. These feature adversarial groups on either side of the aisle who address their remarks to mayor and council, not to each other. Political reality also has a characteristic geometry — a rectangle rather than a circle. Chairs in serried rows face a reputed "leader" at the front rather than enabling potential citizen leaders to face one another.

Another model is "barn raising." This practice, once familiar in America's heartland, is still carried on by the Amish. Daniel Kemmis, former Speaker of the Montana House of Representatives, has provided an account of the political-economic significance of barn raising which amply justifies its selection as a model: "The Volbrechts had to be at the barn raising. . . . In another time, Albert (Volbrecht) and Lilly (Kemmis) would have nothing to do with one another. But on those Montana plains . . . avoiding people you did not like was not an option." What the barn raising model indicates is the need for a political culture of cooperation in which people are asked to approach an issue as problem solvers, not adversaries. As Kemmis states: "People who have worked together seem to listen to one another without setting up mental opposition." Thus, a practical, latter-day political version of barn raising would be problem-solving community forums in which participants are asked to complete a piece of work with others between meetings.

Town meetings and barn raising, however, are small-town models. What about cities? There the model takes another form, that of the old-style local party committee. Members would reflect a diverse cross section of a polity. They would intimately know their neighbors. They could canvass their neighbors door-to-door at least twice a year, working to get them to participate in the political process by which representative democracy functions — through voter registration, provision of information to voters, and "get out the vote" (GOTV) efforts. This is a grass roots political organization model, not a grass roots problem-solving model. It, too, lives on, as a recent TV news vignette about Chicago precinct workers canvassing for Clinton showed.

There are also modest degrees of power and recognition in this model, as local committees have the responsibility for screening local candidates, and party leaders value GOTV performance. The people who exemplify this model are not the stereotypical ward heelers made famous by "Plunkett of Tammany Hall." They are good-hearted, community-spirited people, dedicated to democratic politics. If the major political

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parties had continued to water the grass roots of American democracy represented by such people, they might still be vital institutions. As things stand, parties have become vehicles of a political star system, rather than issues. Contributions to party funds have been devoted to financing individual campaigns rather than to keeping local political infrastructure in good repair.

The fourth model is the "Man in the Mirror." This can also be labeled a model of the "politics of good intentions" or of "good causes." People become concerned about an issue or problem, such as the homeless, abortion, the environment, or child care. They discover like-minded people. They organize. They develop position papers. They demonstrate. They lobby. They find they can be effective as organized groups, both doing good and having some influence in the halls of power.

So, again, where, and who, is the citizen leader? Do we have one model, or four, or more? Or are we looking for a four-in-one, or more-in-one?

Each of the four models exhibits some shortcomings relative to the ideal. As noted, the town meeting model, though it appears to be a participative ideal, does not work for large numbers. The electronic version touted by Ross Perot, for example, is misleading. Though it may facilitate some voter/leader interaction, it fails to facilitate or even acknowledge voter-voter interaction.

Similarly, barn raising is a small community model. It is still relevant, of course, in helping to revitalize local democracy.

The local political party committee model can serve to reinvigorate local democracy, and also to revitalize sagging political parties, but it is, by definition, localized.

The shortcomings of the "Man in the Mirror" model illustrate the old adage: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Its major drawback is the tendency of the advocates of good causes to eschew politics. John Dewey pointed to this as a basic weakness of the American polity 65 years ago when he wrote about "the problem of defining the relationship which nonpolitical groups bear to political union." On the other hand, still another familiar maxim warns us that "if good people stand aside, knaves and fools take over." A study of citizens and politics sponsored by the Kettering Foundation implies that such "good people" may be citizen leaders. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, they are well intentioned. Yes, they have demonstrated through their actions what the political system has failed to provide: *that you can make a difference.* All that is well and good but what it achieves is largely private satisfaction.

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Paradoxically, there are contrary consequences. Because "good people" have stood apart from the political process except as lobbyists for their own good cause, they have

aggravated the faults of the existing system — a fragmented system of interest group politics. Because they tend to commune with like-minded souls, they widen gaps between groups rather than bridging those gaps. Their behavior can be judged as Notre Dame Professor Stanley Hauerwas judged the behavior of another good group — practicing Christians — in saying: "attempts . . . to avoid political involvement because of the 'dirty' nature of politics are rightly condemned as irresponsible. To withdraw from the political in order to remain pure is an irresponsible act of despair." Thus, "Man in the Mirror" has become part of the political problem rather than a source of the solution.

In addition to the shortcomings specific to each model, there is one they share. What's missing from each of the pictures? Each seems to depict a disembodied process, somewhat like the textbook picture of a market economy. What's missing from the latter is the entrepreneur, defined by economists as an "innovator," "gap filler" and "resource mobilizer" in the marketplace. What's missing here is a similarly motivating force — a political leader, catalyst, starter-upper, entrepreneur, or citizen leader.

Defining the Citizen Leader

The entrepreneurial analogy is apt. It helps us to see the figure of "citizen leader" emerging with sharper definition into the foreground of the political picture — as both sustainer and sustainee of a political process which the leader would serve to redefine and renew. The citizen leader would be a political entrepreneur. As an "innovator," he/she would promote experiments in public life to demonstrate new ways of involving people in the political process. As a "gap filler," he/she would bridge the gaps revealed by the existing models. As "resource mobilizer," he/she would bring people and groups together and bring them back into the political process.

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The innovator's role is the most critical — and the most trying. The citizen leader needs to find new ways of involving people in the political process. First and foremost, the innovator needs courage: the courage to stand up and speak out publicly when something is not right; the courage to go against the grain of conventional wisdom or public opinion when something basic is at stake. The innovator is sometimes a "whistleblower," not a "go-along/get-along" person; not part of the "silent majority."

Fortunately, courage, entrepreneurship, and innovation are not contingent upon education, income, or expert background. For example, Peter Asaro, an elected member of the School Committee of the City of Gloucester, (Massachusetts), is its only blue-collar member. Yet, more than most others, he stands up and speaks out when he thinks something is amiss. Does one example make

a case? Statistically, no, but with respect to genuine (public-spirited) political entrepreneurship, yes. Other such examples of political courage and integrity could be identified. For a while, the grass roots leadership needed for a new politics may be counted in small numbers, but it will arise from all walks of life, not through correlations with socioeconomic status.

It is not sufficient to say what the figure of "citizen leader" is; we also need to say what it is not. A citizen leader seeks to change the rules of the game, to empower nonpowerful others to have an effective voice or role in solving public problems, *not* to demonstrate how clever he/she can be in exploiting these rules on behalf of a cause, interest group, or political career. A citizen leader is a public entrepreneur who is a community *political* organizer, a leader who works to reform the political system, not a career politician who latches onto the language of change simply for the sake of getting elected. Diane Feinstein's "status quo must go" campaign slogan, for example, does not suffice to make her either a citizen- or a political-leader.

Prescription

How is the citizen leader to be created, nurtured, and sustained? The prospect of a new politics may encourage some to step forward, to take the risks that citizen leadership entails, grow into the new role, and thereby add to a growing supply of citizen leaders.

The key players in the production of citizen leaders have already been identified — political parties, the "Man in the Mirror," and the American people. The play is simple in concept, but long and hard to achieve in practice. It is basically John Dewey's suggestion of 65 years ago — put the 3 players together on the same stage and experiment with various ways of getting them to act so that an American "public" is gradually created.

The dynamics of the play are easily imaginable, but highly uncertain. One scenario might run as follows:

- Political parties, perhaps under threat of a new independents' party, compete to see which of them will do more to empower the average American and to attract the "Man in the Mirror";
- The latter, faced with diminishing returns of cause-oriented, single-issue politics and attracted by new party activities, joins party committees in order to help revitalize politics at the grass roots;
- Local party committees and newly political cause advocates join forces to experiment with variants of the "town meeting" and "barn raising" models in order to involve more people more effectively in the political process and experiment with new approaches to problem solving on contentious issues; and,
- Growing grass roots political problem-solving activity and the revitalization of political parties at the local level lead to the gradual creation of an American political community — a "community of discourse." This public would demand a new kind of

political leader (our "citizen leader") in the halls of power, a supply of which would have been generated by the aforementioned kinds of activities. This, in turn, would effect candidate recruitment and selection, especially as potential candidates transform parties at the local level and demonstrate their potential.

The promise of a new politics will arouse some. They will see in it the chance to rebuild the American political community; the chance to renew the Great American Experiment by initiating miniexperiments in local democracy; the chance to heal rifts in the American body politic by bringing diverse interest groups together to forge common goals, a shared *public* interest, even while recognizing the distinctive contributions which various groups and individuals bring to the table; the chance to get vital new blood coursing through the arteries of our political system; even the chance to rise to Tocqueville's challenge to create a new "science of politics," a humane science based on observation of the consequences of alternative arrangements, rather than the social, political, and psychological pretensions to "science" which are used to rationalize current arrangements and manipulate public opinion.

More generally, the promise includes a chance to redefine what liberty and freedom mean, a chance, as Dewey put it, for "a greater liberty to share in other associations, so that more individual potentialities will be released and personal experience enriched." It provides the opportunity to tap the ethical and moral springs which run deep in the American tradition, to define values-in-action for political conduct. All in all, it offers the chance of creating citizen political leaders who will go on to become citizen legislators, governors, or even president. It is only a chance, but one we can and must take. "The cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy," Dewey wrote. The quicker the major political parties and their pretenders to political leadership recognize that the revitalization of local democracy — the nurture of citizen political leaders from the grass roots — is their number-one domestic issue, the faster the renewal of American democracy will come about.

Dr. Peter Bearse is an economist and founder-president of Development Strategies Corporation, a consulting firm that formulates economic development strategies and programs for clients in the U.S. and abroad. He has held elective office in Princeton, New Jersey and Gloucester, Massachusetts, and ran for Congress in 1984.

The health of

a democratic society

may be measured by

the quality of

functions performed

by private citizens. . . .

– Alexis de Tocqueville